



DuPage County








# ANIMAL SERVICES

**Saving Animals. Serving People.**

## **BEFORE** *you* **ADOPT** *a* *Guinea Pig*



### Please Consider...

-  **Do you have animals that could endanger the guinea pig?**
-  **Guinea Pigs are not low maintenance pets**  
Preparing greens, cleaning the cage, and providing the attention your pet needs all require time
-  **Which adult in your family will be the primary caregiver?**  
What will you do if you have children or if your children lose interest?
-  **Are you prepared for a commitment of 5 - 8 years to the guinea pig?**
-  **If you are renting, are you allowed to have guinea pigs in your house or apartment?**
-  **Do you have the room? You'll need to have space for a cage and an area for the guinea pig to exercise in.**
-  **Is your home "guinea pig proofed" with cords, houseplants, and chemicals out of reach?**



## **FUN FACTS:** Guinea Pigs...

Guinea Pigs can run when they are only 3 hours old

Guinea Pigs have 4 toes on the forefoot and 3 on the hind foot

Another name for Guinea pig is a Cavy

In the wild they live in herds

Their teeth constantly grow



# TO BUY FOR YOUR GUINEA PIG

**CAGE** or **EXERCISE PEN** - one to two guinea pigs need a 10.5 square feet cage space and adequate exercise room is required daily.

**PAPER BEDDING** can be used as lining within the cage. Do NOT use wood shavings because many are toxic to small animals

**WHITE VINEGAR** to clean the cage

**GRASS HAY** timothy grass, oat blend, or orchard grass

**GUINEA PIG PELLETS** plain pellets with no nuts, seeds, or colored bits

**FRESH PRODUCE** leafy greens including Romaine lettuce, parsley, and cilantro. See our dietary recommendations below.

**WATER/FOOD BOWLS** water bottle or heavy crock for water and smaller one for food

**CARRIER** hard plastic, preferably top opening

**TOYS TO FLING AND CHEW** jingle ball toys, organic willow or apple twigs


**HIDEAWAY** untreated wood house or cardboard house

**Do NOT buy: cages with a wire bottom because it will damage the guinea pigs feet.**



## DIETARY RECOMMENDATIONS

A healthy **ADULT** Guinea pig's diet should consist mainly of unlimited water and hay, measured, high-quality pellets, and fresh vegetables.

 Examples including: romaine leaves, Italian parsley, cilantro, and basil or mint to add flavor. For a healthy treat, give your Guinea pig a small piece of carrot, apple, or strawberry.

Hay and fresh water should be available 24 hours a day.

Pellets should be fresh and relatively high in fiber to supplement Vitamin C into their diets.

REMEMBER overweight Guinea pigs have a hard time cleaning themselves which can lead to infection.

Important:  
ALL dietary  
changes  
must be made  
gradually.

**80%**

Grass Hay



**10%**

Dark Leafy  
Greens



**5%**

High Fiber  
Pellets



**5%**

Healthy Treats





# HOUSING

## Guinea Pig Proofing

- 🐷 Lift all electrical cords **out of reach or cover them** completely with cable wrap that your Guinea pig **cannot** chew through
- 🐷 **Remove all** dangerous objects, chemicals, and plants from reach
- 🐷 **Cover** right angles on molding with inexpensive acrylic corner protectors
- 🐷 **Block off** problem areas with panels or plexiglass

## LOCATION IS KEY:

**TEMPERATURE:** The ideal temperature range for Guinea pigs is approximately 65 - 75 degrees Fahrenheit. The housing should be located away from strong heat sources such as direct sun, wood stoves, fireplaces, and heating vents. Guinea pigs cannot sweat when they become too warm and are particularly susceptible to heat stroke.

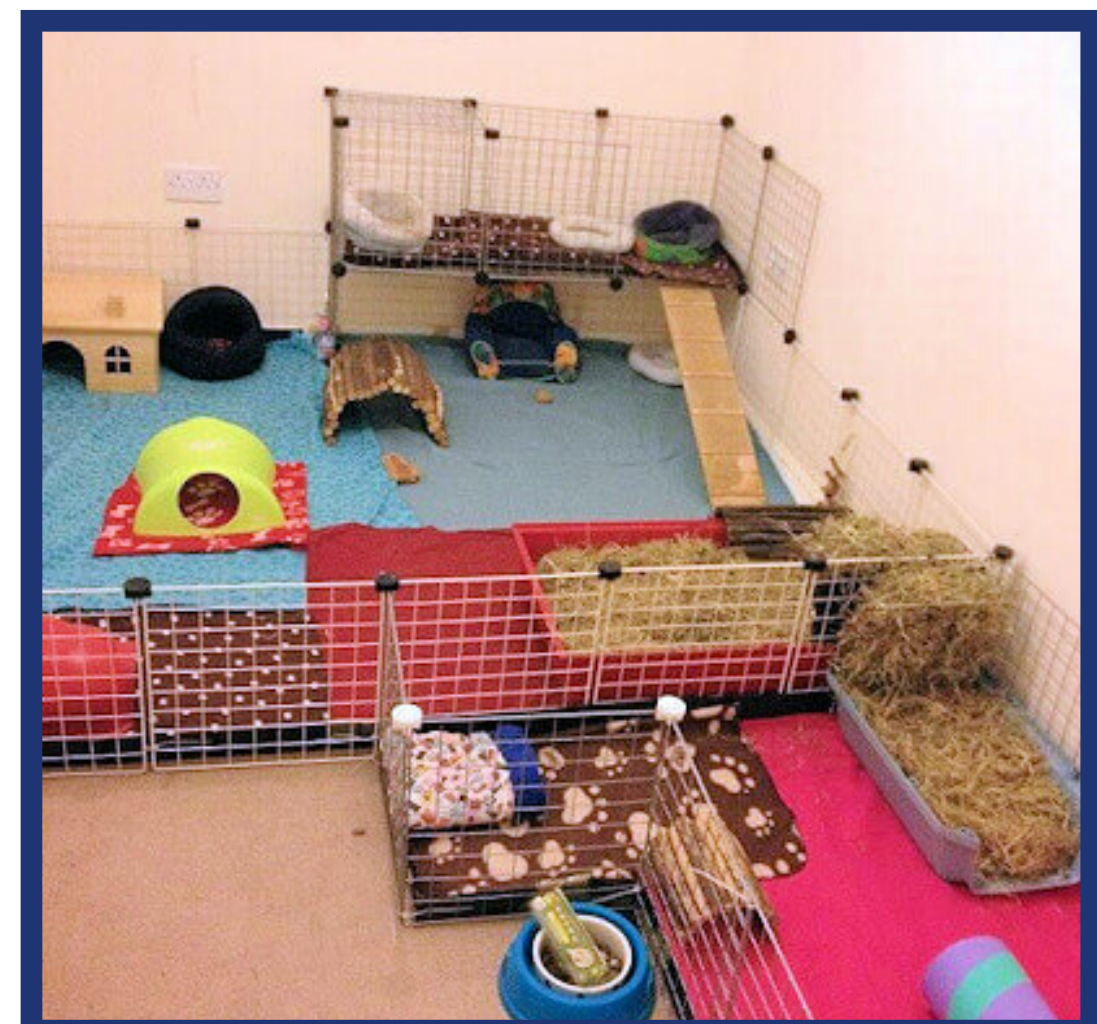
**ACTIVITY LEVEL:** Guinea pigs enjoy being near family activity and benefit from more attention when they're easy to see and hear. A family room or living room works well, but make sure your pigs have a place to retreat if they need some quite time.

**NOISE:** Guinea pigs have very sensitive hearing and their cages should not be placed next to stereos, televisions or other loud noises.

**EXERCISE PEN OPTIONS** pens can be adjusted to fit various spaces and sizes.

**WHY AN EXERCISE PEN ENVIRONMENT?** If your Guinea pig is not able to live in a larger indoor Guinea pig proofed room or area, then an exercise pen is the next best thing.

- 🐷 Provides room for the Guinea Pig to **move and popcorn**
- 🐷 Makes it easier for human **companions to interact** with the Guinea pig.
- 🐷 Has room for **larger toys, cardboard boxes, tunnels, and hideaways**





# HOW TO HANDLE YOUR GUINEA PIG

- 🐹 Being carried is **not** a natural situation for these animals and can induce fear. Overtime the Guinea pig may become more comfortable being carried
- 🐹 **Always** approach the Guinea pig from the **front**. Place one hand under the pet's chest (just behind the front feet) and use the other hand to support its hindquarters
- 🐹 Bring the pet **against** your chest (this position should feel the most secure), still supporting it by using two hands.
- 🐹 If your pet begins to **struggle**, lower yourself down to the floor in order to **reduce** the chance of falling.



**It is recommended to hold your pet for a maximum of 10 - 15 minutes as a time**

## VETERINARY CARE

- 🐹 Guinea pigs do not show illness like cats and dogs , so any perceived problem should be treated as an emergency.
- 🐹 Consult a Guinea pig savvy veterinarian right away if:
  - Limping or paralyzed
  - Scratching excessively
  - Hair loss
  - Is not eating
  - Developed a lump
  - Isn't urinating or defecating
  - Swollen feet
  - Lost a lot of weight
  - Passing bloody urine.

or any other **sudden** behavior change.

